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The War Goes Ever On

By Paul Craig Roberts

04/24/07 "ICH" -- -- Is the Iraq war to become a permanent feature?

The war persists despite the opposition of a majority of Americans and Iraqis.

The war persists despite warnings from US generals that the stress is breaking the US Army.

The war persists despite its enormous cost in red ink and dependence on foreign loans.

The war persists despite its total failure.

The war persists despite the known fact that it was based on Bush administration lies and deception.

President Bush's latest delusion--the surge--has not increased security. The surge has been accompanied by new records of daily Iraqi civilian casualties, such as the 312 Iraqis killed and 305 wounded on April 18. Recently, US commanding general David Petraeus said that Iraqis would just have to learn to live with daily bombing attacks. Petraeus promises Iraqis decades of violence when he says, "Iraq is going to have to learn--as did Northern Ireland--to live with some degree of sensational attacks."

For the past two years polls of the US public have shown that a majority of Americans believe that it was a mistake to invade Iraq.

Polls of Iraqis show that large majorities support attacks on US troops and want US forces withdrawn from their country.

The Iraqi Ministry of Health has concluded that 70% of primary school students in Baghdad suffer from trauma-related stress from passing dead bodies in the streets, from witnessing relatives being killed, and from being injured in attacks.

President Bush and his dwindling band of apologists allege that the US cannot withdraw from Iraq without a bloodbath between Sunnis and Shiites. This bloodbath is already occurring. Indeed, the bloodbath was caused by the US invasion, which took political power from Sunnis and gave it to Shiites in the form of a US protectorate or colony.

Bush's invasion of Iraq had no justification. Continuing the war has no positive effects. Each day that the war continues produces more pointless casualties, more red ink and dependence on foreign creditors, more trauma, and more hatreds.

The Bush administration is continuing the war without a realizable or defensible goal. Although the Iraqi government is supposedly a democratically elected majority Shiite government, in reality it is puppet creature of the US occupation without real power and without public support. The "Iraqi government" exists only within the heavily fortified and US guarded "green zone" in Baghdad. Even this protected zone is subject to attacks. Just last week the parliament was bombed

As a colony or protectorate, Iraq is too costly to maintain. The US has already incurred out-of-pocket and future costs of \$1 trillion or more. The total gains from oil exploitation and military-security complex profits do not approach this massive figure imposed on US taxpayers which is growing by the day.

As bad as it is, the situation could suddenly become much worse. Those in charge of US policy want to expand their targets from Sunni insurgents to Shiite militias. US forces have been unable to prevail over a lightly armed insurgency drawn from 20% of the population. The Shiite population is three times larger. Moreover, Shiites control southern Iraq, the territory through which US supplies must pass from Kuwait to Baghdad. If the Bush administration manages to get itself at war with 80% of the Iraqi population, US troops could be cut off and destroyed.

How would an unstable egomaniac such as President Bush deal with the humiliation?

The US dollar, already under pressure from large and growing trade deficits, has lost more of its value to the Bush administration's dependence on foreign borrowing to finance its war. With foreigners accumulating huge annual sums in US denominated assets, the US dollar's reserve currency role is jeopardized. If the dollar loses its reserve currency role, foreigners will not finance our wars or our trade and budget deficits.

The risks of Bush's war both to Iraqis and Americans is out of proportion to any conceivable gains. The war is all cost and no benefit. Iraqis have been made massively insecure, and their country has undergone tremendous destruction and

turned into a training ground for terrorists.

The entire Middle East has been put at risk of Sunni-Shiite conflict. Muslim hostility to US puppet regimes in Egypt, Jordan, and Pakistan is rising. The Saudis have warned Washington that the Iraq war is causing the ground to shake beneath their feet.

Bush claims that he invaded Iraq because he so highly values democracy that he desired to establish one in Iraq as an example for other Middle Eastern countries to follow. However, what Bush has demonstrated to Muslims is that American democracy is unresponsive to citizens and voters. Bush has demonstrated to the world that the US government is controlled by a small oligopoly of vested interests, the public be damned. Democracy means a government that follows the will of the people. Bush is ignoring public opinion and has made it clear that he will continue the practice.

Bush has shown the world that the only difference between American dictatorship and other dictatorships is that, for now, Americans are permitted to remove their dictator after his term is served.

Paul Craig Roberts wrote the Kemp-Roth bill and was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan administration. He was Associate Editor of the Wall Street Journal editorial page and Contributing Editor of National Review. He is author or coauthor of eight books, including [The Supply-Side Revolution](#) (Harvard University Press). He has held numerous academic appointments, including the William E. Simon Chair in Political Economy, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University and Senior Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University. He has contributed to numerous scholarly journals and testified before Congress on 30 occasions. He has been awarded the U.S. Treasury's Meritorious Service Award and the French Legion of Honor. He was a reviewer for the Journal of Political Economy under editor Robert Mundell.

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